2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

When there is a conflict between villages over their hunting and fishing territories, the captains and bosecias of each town meet on some neutral ground and arbitrate the matter. Then, indeed, the parley becomes wordy and rhetorical. Each cause is championed with long speeches, setting forth [337] oratorically the rights and conditions involved. But once an agreement is arrived at, the matter is closed.

Local disputes, excluding those over women, are not nearly so common or so serious as they are among civilized white men. There is a minimum of quarrelling among the Djukas; they get along together in an almost idyllic way. Wherever there are women, there will, of course, be quarrelling, for, in the words of Confucius, "Disorder does not come from heaven, but is brought about by women." Outside of this factor there is little friction in the Bush Negro community. Their highly communalized government works exceedingly well.

The Granman and his captains have an annual council to make laws for the coming year. This and other assemblies are known as *kwata*. The captains and bosecias from surrounding villages concentrate at some important town to meet the Granman there. The Council near Ganwe, the trading-post, included the villages of Nu, Lombe, Biodoti, Ganya Condree, and Adawai. Jankooso refused to hold his parley in the town proper, although Ganwe is the largest village in the entire tribe, because there is a Christian mission station there, conducted by the Moravian Brothers. Jankooso is in favour of retaining the ancestral gods of the jungle [339] and does not want to [illegible] the white preachers.

/12 cont./

579 691 641 The morality of the Refugee Blacks knows in effect only obligations of a social and religious order. As for everything concerning material life, each one has the absolute right, one could even say the duty, to act as he sees fit, insofar as he does not wrong anyone else.

643 691 641 [156] If the grand man gave an order obliging someone to act against his own interest, for example if he wished to lower arbitrarily the price of boats, this order would be lawfully void. If the grand man has very great personal influence, he can persuade the Bonis that it is to their interest to obey such a prescription, but in no case can his command have the effect of imposing by force an arbitrary order foreign to the social and religious tradition; the present grand man is weak in character to boot, sensitive to the influence of the Creoles and very little given to exerting any authority.

643 791 In reality, the office of grand man is above all religious. The grand man centralizes, if one may say so, the struggle against evil forces and watches ceaselessly over the welfare of the collectivity.

643 764 When a man dies, his near relatives come to report on the questioning of the yaka. Burial cannot take place until the grand man has made sure that all the prescriptions have been filled. People come to report to him again after the burial so that he can be sure that no supra-human danger remains.

643 795 [782] The grand man has special power over the yaka (spirit) of the dead, which the beliefs of the Refugee Blacks place on a level intermediate between the human and the divine. When one of these yaka exerts against a lineage a vengeance (kuma) whose malignity goes beyond habitual bounds, the grand man beseeches it to stop; they allege that things go back to normal, at least for a time.

This power attributed to the grand man invests him, in the eyes of the Boni, with a supra-human character. It is the very foundation of his political power.

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[428] Land held by right of use cannot be sold nor rented, but only loaned. Neither can it be transmitted by inheritance; this would be entirely contrary to the thinking and custom of the Refugee Blacks, hostile to everything that would violate the legal joint possession of the lineage. Inheritance can affect only the harvest in process
[425] from clearings. Once this harvest is made, the land can be occupied by any member of the lineage, man or woman, who wishes to cultivate it; and if there is any dispute, it is obligatorily settled within the lineage; the grand man would refuse to judge it. Kinship degree /12/ does not enter in, at least in principle, since they can say to each other "brother," "uncle," or "grandfather" in the classificatory sense.

423 The only attenuation of the rigor of this principle provided
428 for by custom is that upon the death of a woman, her daughters have a right of priority to utilize her lands.

423 The Refugee Blacks have a clear tendency to remain faithful
241 all their lives to the same clearings. The study we have made of
128 the clearings in Boni country gives poor information on the history of each clearing, for it would have been necessary to be able to consult on the spot a large number of people, which we were not able to do; nevertheless it allows us to state that in the neighborhood of the residence villages, individuals keep their right of use of a clearing for the length of their lives.

42 Here is for example the transmission of rights over clearings
241 101 to 112 /sic/ (see genealogical table of the Dju kp) (1).

1. See plate at the end of this work: Distribution of lands in the neighborhood of the principal Boni villages.

[Papaïston Village]

/93 cont./

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No.	Last User	Year	By What Right	Duration of Last Fallow Period
114 ○	Gou (P1. F9): clearing cut by her husband Akwali		id.	id.
115 ○	Pati (P2. F7): clearing cut by her husband Malpa	1951	id.	cleared off for the 1st time on old secondary forest
116 ○	Hédina (P1. F2): clearing cut by her husband Saïki	1951	id.	id.

[52] These six clearings are held by women of the Papaïnon lineage, in accordance with the residence principle of the Refugee Blocks.

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/94/ The Social System Illuminated by the Study of Implantation on the Soil

128 Study of the clearings in the neighborhood of the farming villages gives exact information about the structure of the kin groups which cannot be obtained by direct interrogation.

423 613 621 --Transmission of rights over land within the lineage fraction having the same residence constitutes an imprescriptible legal principle, to which one refers as the conclusive argument to settle every dispute;

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The laws of Odun. The cult of Odun (Odü) is the keystone of the social and religious structure of the Refugee Blacks. It is a very secret cult; its rites are not practiced in the presence of outsiders and all curiosity about it meets with frank hostility. The Boni, who talk rather freely about the cults of possession, are mute on the subject of Odun, and one may spend years among them without even hearing this name uttered.

The worship of Odun is common to the Boni and the Saramaka (perhaps this is what explains the trustful relations which exist between the two groupings). Among the Djuka it is replaced by the worship of Gwangwéla (Grantata), which has exactly the same functions and rites.

Odun is not to be confused with the creator God Nana (Masa Gadu). The myths explaining the relationship of these two entities were not known by our informants, but it is clear that Odun was sent to men by Masa Gadu as legislator and judge.

Odun's laws have a profound originality, as much by their content as by the sanctions which accompany them. It is not excessive to speak of a religious and moral doctrine of the Refugee Blacks.

These laws appear in negative form. A certain number of acts and behavior are forbidden to those who have entered the society of the Refugee Blacks by taking an oath which binds them for good and all. Offenders will be punished without the direct intervention of men, by the all-powerful action of Odun, who will kill them or /196/ strike them down with sicknesses. As a general rule, Odun's punishment is death; this is what explains the fear his name inspires.

Odun forbids:

--Sorcery, wisi, in the most general sense, that is, any magic action having as its purpose the killing, making ill, and in a general way doing harm to another person.

/197 cont./

The rites of the worship of Odun are known only by the grand man and by an old man who replaces him when he travels. They are practiced only on the occasion of the collective oath against wisi, renewed every two or three years, and when it is necessary to implore Odun's mercy toward an offender. The officiant bathes the latter's body with a maceration of leaves that he alone knows.

To question Odun and know whether he pardons, they make use of a sacred object named afalaku, placed on a board put on the heads of two men. The answers yes and no are deduced by interpretation of the movements of the bearers, as in the interrogation of the dead.

The oath before Odun is also practiced as a legal test, permitting a man unjustly accused of theft or any misdeed whatever to justify himself.

Thus, in November, 1959, B... of Asisi, accused by two Djuka of being responsible for the burning of a large cabin /carbet/ in which objects of value were stored, asked to justify himself before Odun.

Odun's laws, which have the effect of forbidding violence, vengeance, and every form of oppression, give to the society of the Refugee Blacks a unique atmosphere of dignity and serenity which is not found to the same degree in animistic African societies. Most African societies censure sorcery and murder, but they accept vengeance and various forms of oppression. It is probable that the men who, two or three centuries ago, deep in the forests of Surinam, developed these laws, were inspired more or less consciously by Christian ideas; but they introduced them into an African system of thought, associating them with the idea of material sanctions in the present life, without which they would have been powerless.

/290 cont./

695 461 159 The Refugee Blacks have a sense of contract to a high degree, and they bring /291/ to the execution of work to which they have committed themselves qualities of seriousness, initiative, and a sense of duty not found to the same degree in Black Africa.

157 671 591 Refusal of any lasting commitment. If the Refugee Blacks honor their contracts, they do not like to commit themselves for a long period.

This attitude results from their desire for independence, but also from the moral and religious law which governs their society.

This law forbids infringing on the liberty of persons, humiliating anyone, and doing anything which might be able to plunge him into anger or affliction. Its effect is to prevent any exploitation of the weak, any creation of a servant or proletarian caste. It even leads to the absence of any permanent subordination of one man to another.

[464] The desire for independence of the Refugee Blacks makes them unwilling to bind themselves definitively to a job, however profitable. When a man judges that he has put aside sufficient savings, he leaves the job which furnished him with these resources.

[464] This tendency makes the search for paid work much more difficult and hazardous; it happens that a man may stay for years without finding gainful work, living in straitened circumstances. But that is the price of independence, and it is accepted without hesitation.